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**Assurance is failing now – funding, distractions, China**

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Nevertheless, the United States will need to continue and in some cases accelerate investments in regional relationships, posture, operational concepts, and capabilities if it is to achieve the strategic goals of the rebalance. The past 14 years of war have left the military services with significant challenges in recapitalizing equipment used at a pace faster than programmed, reestablishing full-spectrum force readiness, and confronting an expanding range of challenges from state and nonstate actors globally. It is doing so while drawing down forces and structure and, the recent two-year budget deal notwithstanding, with lower long-term defense spending projections than planned even a few years ago. China’s rapidly expanding military investments and increasingly coercive actions in the region demonstrate both the long-term and near-term challenges facing the United States and its allies and partners in protecting vital regional and global interests. Although Washington seeks to cooperate with Beijing where it can, the United States must also ensure that its engagements, posture, concepts, and capabilities allow it to shape, deter, and, if necessarily, decisively defeat threats to U.S. interests. The threat of invasion by North Korea continues to decrease, but the North’s missile and nuclear programs continue unabated while scenarios for instability within North Korea appear less remote going forward. Over the last few years, the Asia-Pacific region has witnessed significant developments that require a reappraisal of U.S. strategy and force posture, as well as an assessment of the strategy and force posture of U.S. allies and partners. Many of these trends have improved prospects for regional security, but some new challenges are emerging, and some existing risks are worsening. These trends span issue areas of geopolitics, diplomacy, economics, domestic politics, and military considerations. Geopolitically, most states in the Asia-Pacific region are embracing closer security and economic ties with the United States. At the same time, however, states across the region have become more sensitive to China’s growing political, economic, and military power, and are potentially vulnerable to Beijing’s increasingly coercive behavior. Polls in Asian countries indicate strong support for the rebalance, with the notable exception of China.5 The United States is working bilaterally, trilaterally, and multilaterally to reinforce critical rules and norms that underpin a secure and prosperous regional and international order. Yet despite these efforts, there is more acrimony and tension in the U.S.-China relationship, a general deterioration in relations with Russia, and increasing bellicosity from North Korea. In preparing this study, the authors heard a consistent refrain from U.S. allies and partners that, despite their appreciation for the goals of the rebalance, many regional observers worry that U.S. efforts to manage the Iran nuclear negotiations, Russia’s invasion of Ukraine, and conflict with the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) have distracted it from fully implementing the rebalance. The administration has taken important steps to reinforce the rebalance strategy, beginning with the 2012 Defense Strategic Guidance and recently, the August 2015 Asia-Pacific Maritime Security Strategy prepared for Congress.6 The authors also found that the U.S. Pacific Command (PACOM) is well aligned with the rest of DOD in its various lines of effort, including theater campaign planning. Much progress has been made since 2012, when CSIS scholars found significant disconnects across the U.S. government and with allies and partners. Nevertheless, the implementation of the rebalance may be insufficient to secure U.S. interests. Actions by countries in the region routinely challenge the credibility of U.S. security commitments, and U.S. capability development is not keeping pace with challenges by potential competitors, resulting in the balance of military power in the region shifting against the United States. First, the Obama administration still has not articulated a clear, coherent, or consistent strategy for the region, particularly when it comes to managing China’s rise. The language used to explain the rebalance in administration speeches and documents has varied substantially over the last four years.7 The 2012 CSIS independent assessment highlighted this shortcoming, but it remains a problem in terms of reassuring allies and partners and sustaining congressional support. Second, cuts to the defense budget from 2009–2015 have limited the Defense Department’s ability to pursue the rebalance. The October 2015 budget agreement notwithstanding, long-term budget uncertainty and the large cuts already implemented represent major changes from the environment that existed when CSIS scholars conducted the 2012 review. Third, while the U.S. military has instituted major posture changes and is developing new military capabilities to strengthen the rebalance, the anti-access/area denial (A2/AD) challenge is increasing and concerns are growing about the ability of potential adversaries to hold at risk forward-deployed and forward-operating forces throughout the region. Chinese military strategy places a premium on investments in A2/AD capabilities. Its A2/AD umbrella includes long-range cruise and ballistic missiles, advanced integrated air and missile defense (IAMD) systems, and submarines. The goal of these systems is to restrict or outright deny an attacker freedom of entry or maneuver. Chinese investments in cyber; electronic warfare (EW); a blue-water navy; missiles; and intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance (ISR) capabilities serve as powerful reminders of China’s plans to push the United States out of the region in a conflict. These capabilities give China the ability to hold at risk U.S. installations and naval assets in the Western Pacific, U.S. allies and partners, and the freedom to use international air and waterways on which the U.S. economy depends. Absent major operational or technology breakthroughs by the United States and its allies and partners, substantial risk remains that China’s strategy could undermine the U.S. military’s ability to defend U.S. interests in the Asia-Pacific. Fourth, China’s tolerance for risk has exceeded most expectations—as demonstrated by Beijing’s increased operational tempo and construction of military airfields and facilities on seven features in the Spratly Islands. This risk tolerance requires the United States to reassess its China policy, and may lead allies and partners to do the same.

#### US is deeply engaged with China now – Japan should already be freaked out, with ever expanding trade, the BIT is not substantially different than US trade.

#### Link Non Unique – 25 previous rounds of negotiations should disprove the link.

#### Plan helps the alliance—increases perception of U.S. involvement in the region—constructive engagement is key

Tanaka 2015 (Hitoshi, senior fellow at the Japan Center for International Exchange and chairman of the Institute for International Strategy at the Japan Research Institute, Ltd., previously served as Japan’s deputy minister for foreign affairs  
Hitoshi, “The next step for the US-Japan alliance,” Aug 4, <http://www.eastasiaforum.org/2015/08/04/the-next-step-for-the-us-japan-alliance/>)

This evolution in US-Japan alliance relations has taken place as the regional balance of power shifts. Emerging economies such as China, India, and ASEAN countries are rising; Asia’s middle class is growing; and US defence spending shifting toward a more sustainable, ‘lean-but-mean’ posture. Thus as the Abe administration struggles over the next couple of months to pass legislation to expand Japan’s security role, structural shifts in East Asia are making it clear that the next step for Japan and the US must be to transform the alliance into a more multifaceted partnership. Japan must strengthen regional trust. The 70th anniversary of World War II offers an opportunity to affirm Japan’s peaceful postwar identity and to mend ties with South Korea and China. In his anticipated August statement, Abe must unequivocally face up to Japan’s historical wartime transgressions without dropping any of the key elements of the Murayama Statement. At the same time, Abe should set out Japan’s defence policy in a forward-looking way — clearly stating that it is aimed solely at defending Japan and contributing to the peaceful enhancement of the regional security environment — to dispel any misperceptions in China and South Korea that the revised US-Japan Defense Cooperation Guidelines or Japan’s new security legislation to allow limited forms of collective self-defence represent a return to a more aggressive regional posture. A change in the US mindset is needed so it may truly act as a resident power in East Asia. Current projections are that Asia will be home to two-thirds of the global middle class by 2030 and will account for more than half of global GDP by 2050. As the regional order evolves to reflect these shifts, it is critical that the US become more intimately and directly involved in the order-building process. This requires the US to move away from its tendency to act as an external balancer and toward a more engaged day-to-day involvement and leadership role in the region across political, security and economic dimensions. One channel for the US to project such political leadership would be to spearhead the establishment of a four-party China-Japan-ROK-US confidence-building mechanism. Such a mechanism would be well positioned to foster reassurance diplomacy regarding the evolving role of the SDF and the US-Japan alliance, and to promote agreements on military-to-military hotlines and crisis management procedures to reduce the risk of accidental collision and to mitigate damage in the event of a crisis. The US and Japan should strengthen trilateral security cooperation with partners such as South Korea, Australia, India, and the ASEAN nations. In particular, deeper US-Japan-ROK trilateral cooperation, including contingency planning, is urgent given the uncertain situation on the Korean Peninsula. Trilateral cooperation directed toward North Korea should take into account the need to engage China and Russia, make preparations to steer the situation toward a soft-landing unification, and utilise Track 2 diplomacy to inject fresh ideas from academia to ensure the long-term stability of the Korean Peninsula. The forward deployment of US troops throughout East Asia needs to be re-examined regularly — through intensive consultation with alliance partners — to ensure it is politically sustainable and able to meet contemporary challenges. While the US forward deployment is a critical regional public good, it must be re-considered whether maintaining US forces in such a high concentration in one area of the region, as they currently are in Okinawa in the face of strident local opposition, is the best strategy over the long term to fulfil US-Japan alliance goals. Advances in new military technologies and the changing nature of regional security challenges make it increasingly desirable to establish a broader and more dynamic forward deployment posture where US soldiers are more evenly distributed and rotated across the region — a trend that is already underway with increased cooperation with partners such as Australia, India, the Philippines, Singapore, and Vietnam. At the same time, as the SDF continues to expand its roles and functions to engage in limited collective self-defence, there will be greater potential for joint US-Japan basing arrangements, which should be utilised as an opportunity to deepen US-Japan security cooperation. Finally, Japan and the US would be wise to complement their security cooperation with more vigorous efforts to constructively engage with China in key areas, including on multilateral financial institutions, mega-regional trade agreements, and energy and the environment.

#### Japan is in military spending deficit – cant make nuclear weapons

Bremmer 15 **—** Ian Bremmer, foreign affairs columnist and editor-at-large at TIME, 2015, (“Why the World doesn’t have to fear Japan,” TIME, 9/24, Available online at <http://time.com/4047863/the-world-doesnt-have-to-fear-japan/>, Accessed 6/24/16, RR)

Trouble in the East China Sea between China and Japan, the world’s second and third largest economies, has been an uncomfortable undercurrent in global affairs. Now, 70 years after the end of World War II, ostensibly pacifist Japan has passed legislation that expands the role and reach of its military. The angry reaction from the Chinese and South Korean governments that followed owe as much to domestic politics as to memories of WW II–era Japanese militarism. Some fear that Japan’s move signals that East Asia will become the world’s next danger zone. But breathe easier–East Asia is one region we don’t have to worry about. First, it’s much easier to pass a new law than to build a new military. That’s especially true in Japan, which doesn’t have much more money to spend on defense. The country’s debt is already approaching 250% of GDP, and the International Monetary Fund warned this summer that it will rise to as much as three times the size of Japan’s economy within 15 years unless the government reins in spending. The country’s rapidly aging population demands progressively higher spending on pensions and health care. That’s why Japan’s Ministry of Defense is asking for a bump in military spending of just 2.2% for next year, a rise that owes more to increased costs imposed by a weaker yen than a desire to beat China, which is recording double-digit increases in military spending. Nor is there public support in Japan for a more hawkish foreign policy. The new law has eroded Prime Minister Shinzo Abe’s popularity and provoked intense protests inside and outside Japan’s parliament. According to a recent Pew survey, 68% of Japanese want to limit Japan’s military activity, while only 23% want the country to be more active. If Japan becomes militarily aggressive, costs will become unsustainable and opposition to Abe will become entrenched. So if it’s expensive and unpopular, why did the Prime Minister push for this change? Abe wants to demonstrate Japan’s commitment to the military alliance with the U.S. by showing a willingness to become a more active partner. The U.S.-Japan alliance, not a stronger Japanese military on its own, is crucial for countering China’s expansion. In addition, many members of the ruling Liberal Democratic Party (LDP) are more hawkish than the average Japanese. Appeasing them helps Abe build and maintain support within the LDP for his more important drive for economic reform. And the economy is one more reason Japan is not about to stoke conflict. China is Japan’s largest trade partner. We may see more Japanese patrol boats in the East China Sea, but we’re no more likely to see open conflict than we were before this law passed.

#### North Korea should have caused cascading prolif, if it didn’t a more restrained nation like Japan getting weapons would cause prolif either.

#### Japanese rearmament doesn’t create an arms race – it’s just a distraction

Gunnar 14 **—** Ulson Gunnar, Geopolitical analyst and writer, 2014, (“Why Japan’s Rearmament might not matter,” NEO, 7/25, Available online at <http://journal-neo.org/2014/07/25/why-japan-s-rearmament-might-not-matter/>, Accessed 6/24/16, RR)

Japan is a nation in decline. Its population is both aging and shrinking while its economy is mired in stagnation. Shifting toward greater militarization or cultivating adversarial relations with neighbors like China may be an attempt to rally its population around the flag, but that such a measure even seems necessary spells trouble for Japan. And Japan’s military contributions to whichever nations is applies “collective self-defense” to are moot, considering many of these allies are likewise in permanent decline, including the United States itself. It is unlikely Japan’s contributions will allow the US to break even in its Pacific calculus. America’s attempt to “pivot toward Asia” has experienced many setbacks and delays including the ousting of allied regimes in the region and the ever expanding sphere of Chinese influence chaffing against waning US hegemony. In fact, Japan’s remilitarization may only distract it further from devising sustainable socioeconomic reforms necessary for the nation’s recovery, let alone what it needs to thrive and expand. The other possible motive behind Japan’s saber rattling may be yet another collective effort by the West and its regional allies to force China’s hand toward an overreaching Soviet-style arms race and subsequent missteps before the hoped collapse of Beijing’s current political order. Should paranoia and bad intelligence get the better of Beijing, China may find itself overreacting to provocations, both political and tactical, along its borders and spheres of influence. It should be noted that similar saber rattling from Japan has taken place for decades. Similar rhetoric could be heard in 1989, when Japan and the US were seeking their way out of economic recessions. More recently, Japan has made militaristic announcements similar to its most recent declarations, all accompanied by the same condemnation and celebrations along predictable political fault lines. It may be that Japan’s socioeconomic condition is once again dire enough to warrant yet another round of distractions.

#### No Impact – Japan’s constitution blocks nuclear weapons acquisitions.

#### No incentive of East Asian arms race and doesn’t lead to war

Sundstrom 15 **—** Ian Sundstrom, surface warfare officer and holds a master’s degree in war studies from King’s College in London, 2015, (“An East Asian Arms Race: Does it Even Matter,” The Diplomat, 1/16, Available online at <http://thediplomat.com/2015/01/an-east-asian-arms-race-does-it-even-matter/>, Accessed 6/24/16, RR)

Whatever the case may be, most observers treat the concept of an arms race in Asia as self-evidently negative. But is that truly the case? Must an arms race have negative consequences for regional security and stability? Historical evidence and logic say no. Arms races do not lead inevitably to conflict. There are two fundamental requirements before states enter into wars: capability and intent. The first comprises military forces, economic wherewithal, and demographic factors, among other components. It is the means of war, money and guns. The second is the desire to embark upon war. It consists of a grievance, opportunity, or other cause de guerre, and the belief that war is the only, or even just the best, option available to achieve the desired outcome. An arms race involves only the capability side of the equation. Looking at the historical record demonstrates that the relationship between arms races and eventual war is not cause and effect. The classic case is the Anglo-German naval buildup before the First World War. The two countries did indeed rapidly expand their navies, and in the end they did go to war, but there was no obvious intention for war between the two countries. Circumstances outside their control, separate from the arms race – a rigid alliance structure, sudden assassination, and widely-held belief in the social virtues of armed conflict – led Europe to war. Another interesting example is the interwar naval arms treaties involving the United States, United Kingdom, and Japan. Those countries actively limited their naval construction programs in the belief that naval armaments had been a factor in the rush to war in 1914 and correspondingly that preventing any change in the naval balance would relieve pressure. In the end, the treaties were broken by the Japanese because they were intent on imperial expansion and the three powers went to war. The final classic example is the nuclear arms race between the Soviet Union and the United States. In this case, a rapid arms buildup from the 1950s onward, spurred by such mistaken beliefs as the “Missile Gap” on the US side, did not result in war between the two states. As early as the 1960s, both sides had the ability to quite literally eliminate the other from the face of the Earth with their nuclear arsenals, but that did not change the situation. Neither side had any intention of engaging in either a nuclear or massive conventional war with the other. From these three examples it is clear that a simple argument that arms races lead to war is incorrect. The more interesting question when pondering arms races involves a potential adversary’s intentions. In the context of an East Asian arms race, what are Chinese intentions? If we look at the historical record it does not seem that China’s expanding military will necessarily be used for aggressive campaigns. China last went to war in 1979, fighting a brief conflict with Vietnam in response to that country’s invasion of Cambodia the year before. Before that, it fought a short border war with India in 1962 after repeated border clashes as it sought to consolidate its control over Tibet. Earlier, in 1950, China went to war against the United Nations on the side of North Korea after Douglas MacArthur led his troops all the way to the Yalu River. If you take Beijing’s point of view, its wars have been defensive, to protect its interests and allies against aggression. That is, of course, what every nation that has ever gone to war believes, but from the outside China’s historical record is not obviously aggressive. China does have a recent history of aggressive rhetoric about Taiwan and islands in the East and South China Seas, though. Taken at face value, this would indicate that expanded Chinese military capabilities will be used offensively. However, talk is cheap whereas war is not, and rhetoric is just as often used to mask intentions as display them. Aggressive public statements are an easy way to placate nationalist sentiment at home and apply diplomatic pressure abroad. I do not have any doubt that China desires both de facto and de jure control over Taiwan, the Senkaku/Diaoyu Islands, and the various islands and reefs of the South China Sea, but it is more likely that China will continue its current “salami-slicing” diplomatic tactics than it will use its expanding military to engage in campaigns to seize the islands. China currently has the capability to seize these territories (Taiwan possibly excepted), even if it couldn’t defend them against recapture, and so continued restraint speaks volumes to Chinese intent. While we fret about the PLA Navy’s newest frigate and latest stealth fighter, China will slowly use diplomatic maneuvering to achieve its ends well below the threshold of open war. Of course, intentions are slippery and can change drastically without warning. That is why military capability is so often discussed. You can count and analyze tanks with some degree of certainty that tomorrow they won’t suddenly become submarines. Capability, however, is not a substitute for intent and it does not do to study one without the other. Whether an arms race is occurring in Asia or not, it should be remembered that war is not caused by weapons, but by people. China’s defense spending continues to increase, and its neighbors’ budgets may follow suit, but this does not change anything fundamental about the region’s international relations. Keeping the capability/intent framework in mind allows you to see past the bluster about rising defense budgets and expanding capabilities and focus on what really matters: who wants what, and are they willing to fight for it.

#### Impact is non-unique – Abe has been increasing nationalist sentiment for years and Japan doesn’t have a desire for nuclear weapons.